

Legendary Larry

Community Affairs P. 1

Biography-Bird, Larry

HALL OF FAME

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Springfield-bound Bird 'was pretty special'

By David Hughes

Tribune-Star

Want to be the best at something?

Then study Larry Bird.

He's all about being the best.

Thanks to his three fun-filled seasons at Indiana State University and his 13-year playing career with the NBA's Boston Celtics, Bird will be one of seven new members heading into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame on Friday. His selection was announced in June.



Induction ceremonies for Bird, former Harlem Globetrotter ball-handler Marques Haynes, veteran Rochester Royals and Celtics star Arnie Risen and veteran coaches Lenny Wilkens (already inducted as a player in 1989), Alex Hannum, Aleksandar Nikolic and Judy Conradt will take place at Springfield, Mass., the birthplace of basketball. Haynes, Nikolic and Conradt, as well as Bird, were chosen in their first year of eligibility.

But make no mistake about it. Bird, arguably the best forward ever to play the game, will be the featured attraction.

"I wouldn't miss it," said Red Auerbach, the retired Celtics general manager who drafted Bird in 1978.

"I'm certain no one finds it surprising," noted longtime Bird friend Max Gibson, a Terre Haute businessman. "His ability to concentrate is one of his major assets. He can do that in golf, tennis, coaching basketball or whatever."

Before Auerbach or Gibson ever met Larry Bird, the seeds for his Hall of Fame basketball career were planted in southern Indiana in the

See **Induction**, Page H4

Just a little more excitement

Having Larry Bird on the list of national Basketball Hall of Fame's Class of 98 has things buzzing around the Springfield, Mass., shrine. The induction ceremony is Friday, October 2. **Page H18**

His first pass confirmed it all

At Boston's rookie camp in 1979, Boston Globe columnist Bob Ryan saw Bird throw a pass, the likes of which he'd never seen before. "Everything we had heard about his passing was true." **Page H10**

Auerbach says Bird was worth the wait

Celtics legend Red Auerbach drafted Larry Bird as an ISU junior in 1978, knowing he intended to play one more season with the Sycamores. Auerbach, of course, was rewarded for his patience. **Page H6**

Also inside ...

Statistics, biographies, features, photos and memories of Larry Bird's basketball career



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Sunday, September 27, 1998

Tribune Star

Section H

Illustrations by Tribune-Star graphic artist Wanita Niehaus

Naturally, Friday big day for Hall too

Enshrinement anticipated in Massachusetts and beyond

By Mark Bennett

Tribune-Star

A less obvious question might be, "Is the pope Catholic?"

Mike Brooslin, the curator at the Basketball Hall of Fame, answers, "Uh, yeah," when asked if interest in this year's induction ceremony is heightened by the name at the top of the Class of '98, Larry Bird.

"Naturally so," Brooslin adds.

The home of the Hall, and the birthplace of the sport itself, is Springfield, Mass., just a two-hour drive on the Massachusetts Turnpike from Boston, where Bird acquired the nickname "Legend." But Brooslin says the buzz surrounding the Hall of Fame induction ceremonies on Oct. 2 is more than regional.

"It's not just locally [based]," Brooslin says.

Bird's name is as synonymous with "basketball" as is the game's inventor, Dr. James Naismith, Springfield's own. People in Bird's hometown of French Lick, and Terre Haute, where he wrote college basketball's greatest Cinderella story, can claim the first few miles of his path to the Hall of Fame. Then there are the fans in Boston, where he added three more NBA championship banners to the Celtics' collection. And anyone else on the planet who might have missed his artistry caught the last glimpses of it when he played a cameo role on the United States' first Olympic Dream Team in 1992.

So far, 1,200 people have purchased tickets to the Hall of Fame Enshrinement Dinner in the Springfield Civic Center, and 6,000 more have paid to see the induction ceremony. Those numbers, Brooslin says, are up and could grow.

There are other big names on the list announced in June . . . former Harlem Globetrotter ballhandling magician Marques Haynes and an early-era Celtics standout Arnie Risen, along with coaches Lenny Wilkens, Alex Hannum, Jody Conradt and Aleksandar Nikolic of Yugoslavia.

But Bird, obviously, is the big ticket, with three NBA Most Valuable Player awards (1984, '85 and '86) and College Player of the Year awards in 1979 as an Indiana State Sycamore on his resume. And his Hall of Fame treatment will indeed seem special.

A decade ago, famed sculptor Armand LaMontagne carved a wooden statue of Bird for the New England Sports Museum at Boston. The piece, made from an 1,800-pound block of wood, took the

Hall of Fame schedule

All times EST

Thursday, Oct. 1

6 p.m. — Hall of Famer reunion and Gowdy/Bunn awards dinner (ticket required) at Springfield Marriott.

Friday, Oct. 2

12:30 to 1:30 p.m. — Autograph session at Basketball Hall of Fame.

4 p.m. — Cocktail reception (ticket required) at Exhibition Hall, Springfield Civic Center.

5 to 8 p.m. — Enshrinement dinner and ceremony (ticket required) at Exhibition Hall, Springfield Civic Center.

Saturday, Oct. 3

9 to 11 a.m. — Youth clinic (for boys and girls ages 7-15) at Blake Arena, Springfield College (ticket required).

For more information on enshrinement activities, call (413) 781-6500.

artist more than 2,000 to complete. Now, a bronze casting of LaMontagne's original has been made, and will become part of Bird's display at the Hall of Fame.

"That will be unveiled at the enshrinement on [October 2]," Brooslin explained.

Over the years, the Hall has acquired some Bird memorabilia that will go into his personal display on the building's third floor. The ball he used to score his 20,000th career point is there, as are uniforms from his Celtics and Dream Team days, and a piece of the court at Springs Valley High School, where it all began.

As of yet, Brooslin said, there are no Bird artifacts from his days at ISU. However, each inductee is asked to send the Hall some memorabilia before the enshrinement, and Bird's package may indeed include some Sycamore memories.

"A lot of it depends on what [the inductees] have saved," Brooslin said. "I'm sure at some point we'll get something [ISU related]."

That would be Brooslin's preference. "I'm greedy. I always want more artifacts."

The Hall does have a touch of ISU's dream season now. One of the facilities many interactive videos is from the famed 1979 NCAA finals clash between Bird's Sycamores and Magic Johnson's Michigan State Spartans. Johnson and MSU, of course, won that game 75-64 in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Such modern technology is a source of pride for the Basketball Hall of Fame, Brooslin said. The Hall became a computerized wonderland after it moved from its humble birthplace at Springfield College to an \$11.5-million facility in 1985.

There are touch-screen videos at the displays of the Hall's displays. There's

also a competitive shootout area, along with devices to test a visitors' jumping skills and hang time. They can match their footprints and handprints with those of the Hall of Famers.

The Basketball Hall prefers not to compete with the aura surrounding Baseball's shrine at Cooperstown, N.Y. Springfield wants a different approach.

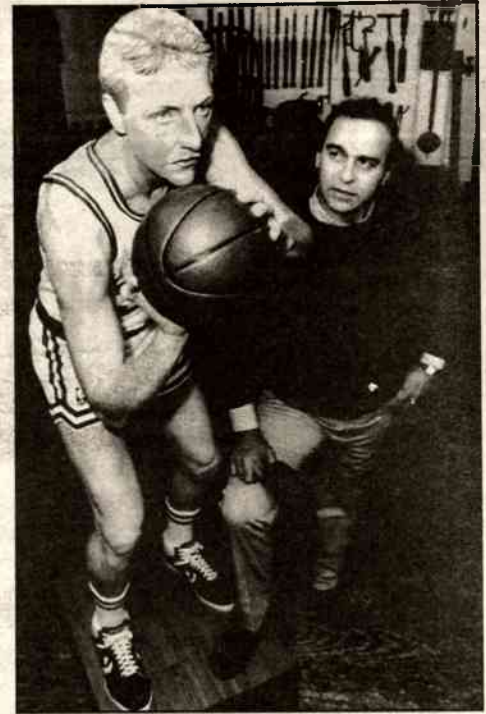
"We don't necessarily want the nostalgic atmosphere. We don't look at our mission as a mausoleum," Brooslin said. "Our objective is to entertain and educate."

"We use the [historical] information, but we try to use it in an entertaining method."

The enshrinement ceremonies are usually entertaining too, said Brooslin, a Springfield native who has been curator since 1987. Each inductee is asked to speak for approximately five minutes, though that timespan occasionally is stretched. For their fans in attendance, a few extra minutes at the microphone may be a crowd-pleaser.

And Bird will have his supporters.

"All of them seem to bring their own cheering sections," Brooslin said. "But, no question, Larry is one of the bigger names we've had in a while."



Tribune-Star file photo/AP

The original: Sculptor Armand LaMontagne poses next to his wooden statue of Larry Bird in 1988. A bronze casting of LaMontagne's piece will be unveiled at Friday's Hall of Fame enshrinement ceremony.

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ISU working on 20th anniversary

Indiana State plans to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Larry Bird and Co.'s 1978-79 trip to the NCAA Finals later this school year.

Just when that happens, however, is still undecided, said ISU acting athletic director Andi Myers. The date of the commemorative ceremony is contingent upon the schedule of Bird, the featured guest and current coach of the NBA's Indiana Pacers.

"We definitely plan on doing something," Myers said, "but we have not spoken to Larry yet."

His availability would play a big part in the planning process, she said.

Work started this summer on commemorating the 100th year of basketball at ISU. An all-time team will be named as well as all-decade teams and the top moments in basketball at the school.

— Mark Gibson

LARRY BIRD: A HALL OF FAMER

Induction • Continued from Page H1

mid-1970s.

"I wanted to be the best player on my high school team [at Springs Valley, where he graduated in 1974]," Bird recalled during a June 30 news conference in Indianapolis. "Then in college, I wanted to be the best player on that team."

At ISU, the 6-foot-9 forward left no doubt that he was the best player from 1976 to 1979.

Bird led the Sycamores to impressive records of 25-3, 23-9 and 33-1 respectively, including a runner-up finish in the 1979 NCAA tournament. Named NCAA Player of the Year in '79, he still owns the school's career records for points (2,850), rebounds (1,247), steals (240), field goals (1,154) and free throws (542). He tallied 40 or more points 15 times.

Bird's no-look passes, tenacious rebounding and long-range bombs put ISU basketball on the national map, albeit temporarily.

"Larry was pretty special," remembered Bill Hodges, who moved up from assistant to head coach for Bird's senior year and now works as an assistant at Murray State.

"I'm sure there have been other players who have carried their teams to great heights, but I can't imagine any player having as much impact on a team as Larry did."

Away from the court, Bird per-



Tribune-Star file photo/Bob Poynter

Old friends: Terre Haute businessman Max Gibson (right), with Larry Bird and his brother Eddie (seated), says Larry's concentration was a key to his success.

formed maintenance work for Terre Haute businessman Max Gibson in his

ISU days. The two have maintained a friendship over the years.

"He was here every day," Gibson said, reminiscing about how he caught an early glimpse of Bird's work ethic. "He didn't complain. He just worked."

Describing the young Bird as a "southern Indiana backward farm boy," Gibson remembers his first meeting with the future basketball Hall of Famer.

"Bill Hodges had talked to me about giving Larry a job," he said. "Then Larry walked by the window and I got excited. He shot baskets with my kids [one son and three daughters]. Then he had dinner with us that night, I think."

After Bird accepted a higher-paying job with the Celtics, he helped them capture three NBA championships (1981, 1984 and 1986). He also earned three Most Valuable Player awards and two NBA Finals MVP awards along with being a 12-time all-star before he retired with a bad back in 1992. He ended up with 21,791 regular-season points, an average of 24.3 per game.

He also played on the U.S. Dream Team which won the gold medal in the 1992 Summer Olympics at Barcelona, Spain. With Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson, Karl Malone, Charles Barkley, Patrick Ewing, David Robinson, John Stockton, Scottie Pippen, Chris Mullin, Clyde Drexler and Chris-

tian Laettner as Bird's teammates, the '92 Dream Team is considered the best collection of basketball players ever.

In 1996, Bird was named to the NBA's 50th Anniversary All-Time Team. He remains among the all-time leaders in several statistical categories.

Nowadays, the 41-year-old Bird is preparing for his second season as head coach of the Indiana Pacers. In 1997-98, he guided the Pacers to a franchise-record 58 victories and an appearance in the NBA Eastern Conference finals, where they lost to the eventual champion Chicago Bulls four games to three.

Not surprisingly, Bird shrugged off a suggestion that someday he may join Wilkens in the Hall of Fame as both a player and a coach.

"All I'm trying to do is win a championship in Indiana," he said June 30. "I know we've got a good enough team to do it. Next year, I expect nothing but the best."

Considering the NBA's labor dispute appears nowhere near a settlement, there may not be a season next year.

But if the lockout does get lifted, Bird will be striving for the Pacers to be the best.

Tribune-Star Sports Editor Mark Bennett contributed to this story.

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Always Close to Home

Auerbach had a 'damn good' reason to wait

After one year delay, Red had new franchise

By Mark Bennett

Tribune-Star

Maybe Larry Bird just knew. Why else would he walk into a crowd of pro basketball's best sharpshooters and declare himself the winner before the 1986 NBA Long Distance Shootout had even begun?

Such chutzpah is what Red Auerbach loved best about Bird.

"He came out, took off his practice jacket and said, 'You guys ought to have a little trouble to decide who's going to finish second,'" Auerbach recalled last week in a telephone interview from his Washington, D.C., office. "And then he went out and won it."

Bird won that 3-point contest in '86, and then won it again in '87 and again in '88. Of course those NBA All-Star moments were mere sideshows to Bird's other heroics as the star of the Boston Celtics. In 13 seasons from 1979 to 1992, he helped add three more NBA championship banners to the rafters of Boston Garden and was the league's Most Valuable Player in 1984, '85 and '86.

Sure made Auerbach look smart.

Not that his image needed much help. As coach of the Celtics, Auerbach's teams won nine NBA championships, including eight in a row. His career coaching record of 938-479 is surpassed only by Lenny Wilkens.

But Auerbach's greatest achievement may have come in the spring of 1978 when he used the No. 6 pick in the draft to take a thin, blond country kid from unheralded Indiana State University in a place called Terre Haute. The debate over whether Bird was a small-school flash in the pan or a gem didn't matter to Auerbach. Nor did the fact that Bird was only a junior at ISU and didn't intend to leave school early.

A one-year delay was a small price.

"I thought he was damn good," Auerbach remembered of his first glimpses of Bird at Sycamore games and on television clips, "good enough to wait for. Besides, I'd done it before

with Frank Ramsey."

Auerbach drafted Ramsey as a Kentucky junior in 1953, and began his Celtics career in '54, averaging 13.4 points a game over nine seasons.

Bird, who will be inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame on Friday, turned out even better.

"Time passes quickly, and when you've got a player that has the kind of talent he had, you've got to move fast," Auerbach said.

The five teams that passed on Bird probably still regret it.

When his senior season finally arrived, Bird disproved all but the most stubborn skeptics, leading Indiana State on an improbable 33-game winning streak that brought the Sycamores to the top of the final national polls and the NCAA Finals against Earvin "Magic" Johnson (back then, some people still called him Earvin). ISU lost 75-64 to the Spartans, but Bird was named college basketball's Player of the Year.

The miracles didn't stop there.

Auerbach quit coaching in 1966 to serve as Celtics general manager and president, a position he still holds. He restructured the organization in the early 1970s, and wound up producing two NBA titles in 1974 and '76. But by the 1978-79 season, when Bird was leading Indiana State to heretofore unseen glories, the Celtics finished 29-53. It was their worst season in 29 years.

Larry Bird to the rescue.

Within one season, Bird, a mere rookie, led the Celtics to a record of 61-21. Only twice in the franchise history had Boston won more games. When Bird's second season ended, the Celtics were again the NBA champions.

All the while, Auerbach saw Bird as more than a physically gifted athlete. He knew how to play, and, more importantly, how to win. Bird's basketball intellect was so keen, Auerbach later produced an instructional video "Winning Basketball" with Bird.

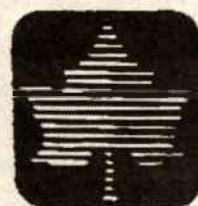
"It was his work ethics," said Auerbach, starting a list of Bird's virtues. "He was as hard a worker as I've had. He'd come to practice always on time. And 99 times out of a hundred he'd stay an extra hour to an hour and a half, shooting, messing around. And he always played hurt. And he improved his game every year."

See *Red*, Page H7



Tribune-Star file photo/AP

The day it all began: Celtics President Red Auerbach and prize rookie Larry Bird hold up the former Sycamore's new jersey on June 8, 1979, at a Boston news conference. Auerbach had just signed Bird, a No. 6 pick in the 1978 NBA Draft, to his first pro contract.



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LARRY BIRD: A HALL OF FAMER

Red • Continued from Page H6

"There's a certain level you can maintain and still be a fine player," Auerbach added. "Larry wasn't satisfied with being a fine player. He wanted to be great."

That savvy extended off the court too, Auerbach said. And contrary to the initial East Coast reaction to this shaggy-haired kid from Indiana with a taste for country music, beer and softball, Bird was no backward, backwoods hick. Auerbach sensed that during his first few meetings with Bird during his junior season at ISU.

"He was smart, extremely smart," Auerbach said. "He had three guys [from Terre Haute] that advised him, and helped him choose an agent and gave him advice on everything he did."

"So he didn't come up here to Boston as some old country bumpkin who didn't know what was going on. He had sound advice."

Bird chose renowned Boston-based sports agent Bob Woolf, whose list of clientele included a few other Beantown icons such as Carl Yastrzemski, John Havlicek, Luis Tiant, Doug Flutie and Jim Rice.

Auerbach once told the Quincy, Mass., Patriot-Ledger that Woolf made those first contract talks quite interesting.

"When we negotiated his first contract, we agreed on a salary," Auerbach said. "And then his agent, Bob Woolf, came up with all these ridiculous perks. I

told him to forget it. Even Larry laughed about it. He just didn't need those things."

Woolf became a part of the Terre Haute lore surrounding Bird's magical senior year. He was in the crowd at Sycamore Field watching Bird make a cameo appearance as a first baseman for the ISU baseball team in the spring of '79. The crowd, and surely Woolf too, held its breath when Bird and the Sycamore catcher collided in pursuit of a foul popup. Sly as ever, Bird rose slowly, finally flashing a smile that he was OK.

Woolf died at age 65, one year after Bird retired.

The audience that day at Sycamore Field was unusually large. And even now, the fascination with Bird seems strong in his home state, where he has supervised another turnaround as coach of the Indiana Pacers.

Auerbach understands Hoosiers' bond with Bird.

"They're very proud of him, and they should be, because he not only distinguished himself on the court, but also off the court. He was never in trouble. He said the right things and did the right things," Auerbach said. "He's a little bit of an introvert, but lots of great athletes, with all that surrounds them, are that way."

Having turned 81 years old last Sunday, Auerbach, who still goes to his



Fourteen years later: Now a Celtics legend too, Larry Bird poses with club president Red Auerbach along side a LeRoy Neiman portrait on Feb. 4, 1993, as Boston prepared for Larry Bird Night at Boston Garden.

Tribune-Star file photo/AP

Washington, D.C., office every morning, has been around lots of great athletes. He's spent 48 of his years with the Celtics. And with 16 championship teams and now 19 former Celtics players in the Hall of Fame, Auerbach hedges when asked to name the greatest. He does, though, say Bird is "the best forward."

Amid names like Bill Russell, Bob Cousy, John Havlicek, Sam Jones, K.C. Jones, Terre Haute's Clyde Lovellette, Nate Archibald, Dave Cowens and Bill

Walton, Auerbach's compliment to Bird is a lofty one.

"He's right up there at the top of the list," said Auerbach, a Hall of Famer himself.

And why? Auerbach doesn't mention Bird's no-look passes, uncanny shots from impossible angles or his quick-handed, pestering defense.

"The best thing that exemplifies him is his confidence," Auerbach said, "the making of a statement and then backing it up."

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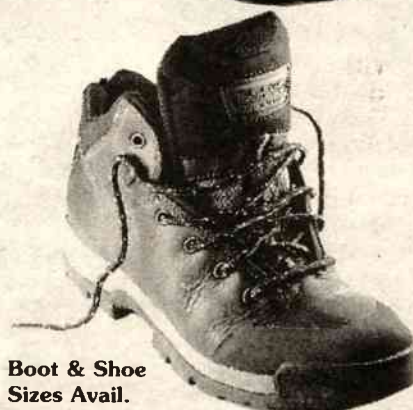
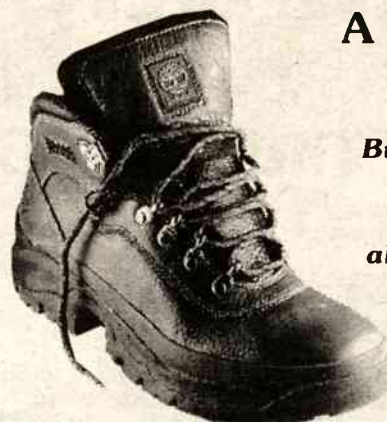
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LARRY BIRD: A HALL OF FAMER

A brief look at how Larry Bird did in each of his games at Indiana State University:

1976-77 season

ISU 81, Chicago State 60 — Nov. 27, in front of a crowd of less than 3,000, Larry Bird makes his Sycamore debut at Hulman Center with his first triple-double — 31 points, 18 rebounds and 10 assists. ISU record 1-0.

ISU 85, St. Ambrose 58 — Nov. 30, Bird records his second straight triple-double with 22 points, 16 rebounds and 10 assists in the home win. ISU record 2-0.

ISU 87, Robert Morris 65 — Dec. 3, in the opening game of the Indiana Hall of Fame Classic at Hulman Center, Bird fails to record his third triple-double in as many games, but get 33 points, 17 rebounds and five assists. ISU record 3-0.

ISU 78, Denver 65 — Dec. 4, the championship game of the Indiana Hall of Fame Classic at Hulman Center, Bird goes for 24 points, 16 rebounds and four assists. ISU record 4-0.

Purdue 82, ISU 68 — Dec. 7, the first road game for ISU this season produces the first loss. Bird scores 27 points with 15 rebounds and four assists, but commits nine turnovers. ISU record 4-1.

ISU 94, Augustana (S.D.) 69 — Dec. 9, Bird returns home to score 32 points with nine rebounds and six assists. ISU

record 5-1.

ISU 80, Ball State 69 — Dec. 11, at Muncie, ISU breaks a three-year losing streak to the Cardinals as Bird puts down 25 points with 11 rebounds and four assists. ISU record 6-1.

ISU 80, Central Michigan 62 — Dec. 18, Bird gets his third triple-double of the year: 30 points, 10 rebounds and a season-high 12 assists. ISU record 7-1.

ISU 75, West Texas State 61 — Dec. 20, the Missouri Valley Conference season begins and Bird scores 26 points to go with seven rebounds and three assists. ISU record 8-1.

ISU 79, Drake 73 — Dec. 28, ISU wins its second MVC game with Bird scoring 25 points, grabbing 12 rebounds and handing out five assists. ISU record 9-1.

ISU 104, Evansville 68 — Jan. 3, the Sycamores roll over the Aces as Bird gets 29 points, 16 rebounds and five assists. ISU record 10-1.

ISU 74, Centenary 71 — Jan. 6, in the first game of a home-and-home series, Bird scores 28 points with 12 rebounds and four assists. ISU record 11-1.

ISU 43, West Texas State 41 — Jan. 8, the lowest-scoring game of the year for ISU had Bird at his lowest offensive totals with 12 points, 10 rebounds and one assist. ISU record 12-1.

ISU 90, Butler 67 — Jan. 10, Bird returns to form with 42 points, 11 rebounds and seven assists. ISU record 13-1.

ISU 77, Missouri-Western 58 — Jan. 15, for the first time in five games Bird's rebounding total is in single digits at eight,

Larry Bird: game-by-game



Tribune-Star/file photo

Vote: Larry Bird sentiment ran deep during the 1978-79 season.

but 33 points and two assists help the Sycamores to another win. ISU record 14-1.

ISU 111, Missouri-St. Louis 87 — Jan. 20, the highest offensive output of the season sees Bird go for 47 points — his high for the year which he does twice — 18 rebounds and three assists. ISU record 15-1.

ISU 88, Centenary 70 — Jan. 22, facing Centenary for the second time, Bird sets a season high with 19 rebounds and scores 37 points with two

assists. ISU record 16-1.

Illinois State 70, ISU 64 — Jan. 25, at Normal, Ill., ISU loses as Bird scores 40 points with 16 rebounds and one assist. ISU record 16-2.

ISU 100, Illinois State 84 — Jan. 31, back home at Hulman Center, ISU returns to its winning ways by drubbing the Red-birds. Bird again scores 40 points and adds eight rebounds and four assists. ISU record 17-2.

ISU 77, Wisconsin-Parkside

73 — Feb. 7, the only game of the year that Bird was not credited with an assist, but he scores 37 points and grabs 11 rebounds. ISU record 18-2.

ISU 88, Cleveland State 76 — Feb. 12, playing on the road, Bird scores 38 points with 16 rebounds and one assist. ISU record 19-2.

ISU 87, Eastern Michigan 68 — Feb. 14, almost a Valentine's Day massacre as Bird scores 40 or more points for the fourth time with 40 points, 13 rebounds and five assists. ISU record 20-2.

ISU 83, Loyola-Chicago 72 — Feb. 19, in the final home game of the season, Bird reaches 40 points in back-to-back games for the second time with 45 points, 17 rebounds and five assists. ISU record 21-2.

ISU 77, St. Louis 72 — Feb. 21, the first of four straight road games to close out the regular season, Bird scores 26 points with six rebounds and four assists. ISU record 22-2.

ISU 78, Evansville 63 — Feb. 26, at Evansville, Bird is held to his third-lowest point total of the year and finishes with 24 points, 13 rebounds and five assists. ISU record 23-2.

ISU 80, Butler 65 — Feb. 28, at Indianapolis, Bird rebounds by tying his season-high point total (47) and chips in 19 rebounds and three assists. ISU record 24-2.

ISU 77, Valparaiso 70 — March 5, the regular-season finale sees Bird score 34 points with 12 rebounds and three assists. ISU record 25-2.

Houston 83, ISU 82 — March 9, at Houston, the Sycamores

are eliminated in the first round of the National Invitational Tournament by the Cougars. Bird scores 44 points with 14 rebounds and three assists. ISU record 25-3.

1977-78 season

ISU 85, Westmont 55 — Nov. 26, the Sycamores open the season against unheralded Westmont as Bird scores 29 points to go with 13 rebounds and five assists. ISU record 1-0.

ISU 91, Purdue 63 — Nov. 28, the Sycamores post their first win over the Boilermakers since Dec. 1, 1970. Bird scores 26 points, grabs 17 rebounds and hands out eight assists. ISU record 2-0.

ISU 84, St. Louis 68 — Dec. 1, the third straight game in Hulman Center and Bird scores 31 points with 19 rebounds and eight assists. ISU record 3-0.

ISU 102, Baptist (S.C.) 55 — Dec. 3, the first of three times ISU would score 102 points this season. Bird scored 25 points with five rebounds and three assists. The first time ISU has opened back-to-back seasons 4-0 since the 1965-66 and 1966-67 years. ISU record 4-0.

ISU 93, Central Michigan 77 — Dec. 5, the first road game of the season doesn't bother ISU as Bird sets a season-high with 45 points to go with 14 rebounds and one assist. ISU record 5-0.

See **Game**, Page H9

Congratulation's to Larry Bird

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Game • Continued from Page H8

ISU 102, Evansville 76 — Dec. 10, Bird scores 35 points to go with eight rebounds and seven assists. ISU record 6-0.

ISU 81, Eastern Michigan 72 — Dec. 17, the wins are piling up as Bird has 31 points, 13 rebounds and four assists on the road. ISU record 7-0.

ISU 82, Ball State 50 — Dec. 29, Bird has 24 points, 13 rebounds and six assists in the best defensive effort of the year for the team. ISU record 8-0.

ISU 66, Southern Illinois 58 — Jan. 4, ISU opens the MVC season with a win as Bird gets 21 points, eight rebounds and three assists. ISU record 9-0.

ISU 79, West Texas State 63 — Jan. 7, Bird rips the nets for 30 points with five rebounds and three assists. ISU record 10-0.

ISU 78, Tulsa 59 — Jan. 12, at Tulsa, Bird is held to 16 points but pulls down 15 rebounds and hands out three assists. ISU record 11-0.

ISU 92, Drake 80 — Jan. 14, at Des Moines, Iowa, Bird busts loose for 45 points, nine rebounds and five assists. ISU record 12-0.

ISU 73, Bradley 67 — Jan. 14, the winning streak continues for the Sycamores as Bird goes for 35 points, 13 rebounds and five assists. ISU record 13-0, the best start since the Glenn Curtis-coached team started 13-0 in 1943-44.

Southern Illinois 79, ISU 76 — Jan. 19, the first of six losses in seven games for ISU. Bird racks up 38 points, nine rebounds and three assists. ISU record 13-1.

Illinois State 81, ISU 76 — Jan. 21, Bird scores 37 points with 17 rebounds and five assists in the losing effort. ISU record 13-2.

Wichita State 70, ISU 70 (OT) — Jan. 26, in an overtime road loss, Bird scores 33 points with 16 rebounds and two assists. ISU record 13-3.

Creighton 72, ISU 64 — Jan. 28, Bird has 32 points with 12 rebounds and two assists. ISU record 13-4.

Loyola-Chicago 79, ISU 76 — Jan. 30, Bird scores 28 points with 16 rebounds and six assists. ISU record 13-5.

ISU 67, West Texas State 50 — Feb. 4, a new month sees ISU break the losing string. Bird has 22 points to go with 11 rebounds and one assist. ISU record 14-5.

New Mexico State 83, ISU 82 — Feb. 6, a tough road loss. Bird scores 38 points and has 10 rebounds and two assists. ISU record 14-6.

ISU 102, Tulsa 70 — Feb. 11, ISU bums out of its doldrums by drubbing the Hurricane. Bird has 41 points, 11 rebounds and three assists. ISU record 15-6.

ISU 87, New Mexico State 74 — Feb. 13, a season-high 20 rebounds for Bird along with 34 points and three assists. ISU record 16-6.

Creighton 89, ISU 57 — Feb. 16, Bird is held to 11 points, 10 rebounds and two assists in the road loss. ISU record 16-7.

ISU 90, Drake 71 — Feb. 18, an easy road win sees Bird score 14 points with six rebounds and seven assists. ISU record 17-7.

ISU 72, Wichita State 56 — Feb. 20, 35 points, nine rebounds and three assists for Bird. ISU record 18-7.

ISU 74, Bradley 68 — Feb. 25 — A road win and Bird gets 24 points with eight rebounds and three assists. ISU record 19-7.

ISU 90, West Texas State 71 — Feb. 26, in the MVC Tournament at Omaha, Neb., Bird scores 27 points with nine rebounds and two assists. ISU record 20-7.

ISU 88, Bradley 81 — March 1,

in ISU's second MVC tournament game, Bird has 33 points with 14 rebounds and eight assists. ISU record 21-7.

ISU 80, New Mexico State 78 (OT) — March 3, in ISU's semifinal game at the MVC tournament, Bird scores 40 points and has 11 rebounds and two assists. ISU record 22-7.

Creighton 54, ISU 52 — March 5, in the championship game of the MVC tournament, Bird has 29 points, six rebounds and three assists. ISU record 22-8.

ISU 73, Illinois State 71 — March 10, in the first round of the NIT at Hulman Center, Bird leads with 27 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists. ISU record 23-8.

Rutgers 57, ISU 56 — March 14, at Piscataway, N.J., in the second round of the NIT, Bird has 23 points, 11 rebounds and one assist in the loss. ISU record 23-9.

1978-79 season

ISU 99, Lawrence College 56 — Nov. 25, Bird opens his third season at ISU with 25 points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists. ISU record 1-0.

ISU 63, Purdue 53 — Nov. 27, at West Lafayette, ISU defeats Purdue for the second straight year as Bird has 22 points, 15 rebounds and four assists. ISU record 2-0.

ISU 74, Evansville 70 — Dec. 2, one of the closest games of the season sees Bird score 40 points with 12 rebounds and two assists. ISU record 3-0.

ISU 78, Illinois State 76 — Dec. 4, another close call sees Bird score 31 points with 19 rebounds and six assists. ISU record 4-0.

ISU 102, East Carolina 79 — Dec. 8, in the opening round of the Hatter Classic at Deland, Fla., Bird scores 32 points with nine rebounds and three assists. ISU record 5-0.

ISU 102, Cleveland State 71 — Dec. 9, in the championship game of the Hatter Classic, Bird scores 37 points to go with 15 rebounds and five assists. ISU record 6-0.

ISU 93, Ball State 85 — Dec. 12, Bird goes 3-0 against the Cardinals while at ISU, finishing with 31 points, 14 rebounds and four assists. ISU record 7-0.

ISU 109, Butler 71 — Dec. 16, Bird sets what was then a school record for points in a game with 48 to go with 19 rebounds and five assists. ISU record 8-0.

ISU 99, Morris Harvey 63 — Dec. 30, Bird scores 34 points with 15 rebounds and six assists. ISU record 9-0.

ISU 101, Tulsa 89 — Jan. 3, Bird scores 27 points with 19 rebounds and six assists. ISU record 10-0.

ISU 98, West Texas State 77 — Jan. 6, Bird ties his career high for rebounds in a game with 20 to go with his 32 points and two assists. ISU record 11-0.

ISU 83, North Carolina A&T 64 — Jan. 9, Bird scores 26 points with 16 rebounds and seven assists. ISU record 12-0.

ISU 93, Bradley 74 — Jan. 13, Bird gets his second triple-double of the year with 27 points, 18 rebounds and 10 assists. ISU record 13-0.

ISU 73, New Mexico State 69 — Jan. 15, the last of seven straight home games has ISU off to its best start in school history. Bird gets 24 points with 13 rebounds and six assists. ISU record 14-0.

ISU 94, Wichita State 84 — Jan. 18, Bird scores 31 points with 11 rebounds and one assist. ISU record 15-0.

ISU 90, Creighton 80 — Jan. 20, 29 points, 10 rebounds and six assists for Bird. ISU record 16-0.

ISU 88, Southern Illinois 79 — Jan. 22, Bird reaches doubles figures in rebounding for the 16th time this season with 17 boards, 31 points and eight assists. ISU record 17-0.

ISU 77, Creighton 69 — Jan. 27, Bird scores 17 points with 15 rebounds and nine assists. ISU record 18-0.

ISU 91, New Mexico State 89 (OT) — Feb. 1, Bob Heaton's last-second midcourt shot sends the game to overtime as starters Bird, Carl Nicks and Alex Gilbert all fouled out. Still, Bird finishes with 37 points, 17 rebounds and nine assists. ISU record 19-0.

ISU 66, Tulsa 56 — Feb. 3, at Tulsa, Bird upped his record for rebounds in a game with 22 to go with 22 points and two assists. ISU record 20-0.

ISU 100, Drake 79 — Feb. 6, another triple-double for Bird with 33 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists. ISU record 21-0.

ISU 91, Bradley 72 — Feb. 10, the Bird Cage Defense holds down ISU's top scorer, but the Sycamores win on the road anyway. Bird finished with a career-low four points to go with 11 rebounds and two assists. ISU record 22-0.

ISU 100, West Texas State 75 — Feb. 12, Bird scores 27 points with 19 rebounds and five assists. ISU record 23-0.

ISU 69, Southern Illinois 68 — Feb. 15, Bird scores 20 points to go with 13 rebounds and six assists. ISU record 24-0.

ISU 76, Drake 68 — Feb. 20, 27 points for Bird with nine rebounds, seven assists. ISU record 25-0.

ISU 109, Wichita State 84 — Feb. 24, the final regular-season game is shown on NBC. Bird sets school single-game scoring mark with 49 points. Also has 19 rebounds and two assists. ISU record 26-0.

ISU 94, West Texas State 84 — Feb. 27, the first game of the MVC Tournament at Hulman Center, Bird has 29 points, 15 rebounds and five assists. ISU record 27-0.

ISU 79, Southern Illinois 72 — March 1, in the MVC Tournament semifinal at Terre Haute, Bird has 25 points, 19 rebounds and five assists. ISU record 28-0.

ISU 69, New Mexico State 59 — March 3, in the championship game of the MVC Tournament in Hulman Center, Bird has 20 points, 10 rebounds and four assists. ISU record 29-0.

ISU 86, Virginia Tech 69 — March 11, in the NCAA sub-regional at Lawrence, Kan., 22 points, 13 rebounds and seven assists for Bird. ISU record 30-0.

ISU 93, Oklahoma 72 — March 13, in the NCAA sub-regional at Lawrence, Bird goes for 29 points, 15 rebounds and five assists. ISU record 31-0.

ISU 73, Arkansas 71 — March 17, in the NCAA Midwest Regional at Cincinnati, Bird nets 31 points, 10 rebounds and three assists. ISU record 32-0.

ISU 76, DePaul 74 — March 24, in the NCAA Final Four semifinal at Salt Lake City, a close game ends up with the sensational Bird accumulating 35 points, 16 rebounds and nine assists. ISU record 33-0.

Michigan State 75, ISU 64 — March 26, in the NCAA Final Four championship game, ISU can't get by Magic Johnson and the Spartans. Bird scores 19 points with 13 rebounds and two assists. ISU record 33-1.

—Compiled by James Willis



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For Boston, it was love at first sight

From outset, columnist says,
'We all thought he was wonderful'

By Mark Gibson

Tribune-Star

As Bob Ryan tells it, The Pass was a thing of beauty, magical and almost ethereal.

It was in the fall of 1979, while Larry Bird was attending the Boston Celtics' rookie camp in Marshfield, Mass., that Ryan, a sportswriter and columnist for the Boston Globe, was assigned to cover the camp.

Aside from a college game Bird's junior year at Indiana State, it was one of the first times Ryan had seen Bird in person.

During one of the early sessions, Ryan recalls, the lanky 6-9 forward came up with the ball on a long rebound at the defensive end of the court and spun around to get the ball up the court. What happened next is something Ryan says he's seen only once.

According to Ryan, Bird flung an underhand bullet pass 50 feet down-court, well in front of his running teammate. But the ball had enough backspin when it hit the floor to bounce back into the player's hands.

"I'd never seen anything like it," said Ryan, an erudite observer of the game who began covering the Celtics in 1969. "It was just stunning that everything we had heard about his passing was true."

When Ryan later questioned him about the pass, Bird told him that he had learned it on the tartan-surface floor at Hulman Center. Bird told him The Pass could only be made on an artificial floor and not on a true wooden floor.

"Nobody saw anything like that again," Ryan said as only a mythologist could.

The venerable sportswriter is a virtual encyclopedia of Larry Bird knowledge, having more statistics and trivia about the media-shy Bird committed to memory as anyone alive.

In fact, he wrote the book on Bird.

The two collaborated to write Bird's autobiography, "Drive."

Prior to The Pass, the only time Ryan had caught a glimpse of Bird was during a 1978 game at Hulman Center.

Ryan said he had caught wind of a "phenomenon" at Indiana State that the Celtics were looking at.

The night before he was to cover a

Providence at Michigan State game, Ryan decided to drive to Terre Haute from Indianapolis to see the phenomenon that was playing in an obscure corner of the athletic world, a place previously outside the reach of the national sports spotlight.

"The idea that there would be a great player at Indiana State would have raised a few eyebrows," he said. But he was indeed watching a great player at Indiana State as Bird and the Sycamores played NIT opponent and rival Illinois State.

"He put on a great show," Ryan recalled, "and I remember coming away thinking I had seen something very special."

The next night, while covering Providence and Michigan State, he saw another college "phenom" who would the following year face ISU in the NCAA championship game and would have his career forever linked with Bird's — none other than Earvin "Magic" Johnson.

"I believe that the single greatest achievement in basketball history was Larry Bird dragging Indiana State to the NCAA championships," Ryan declared, adding he was "completely sold" on Bird's abilities from the moment he laid eyes on him.

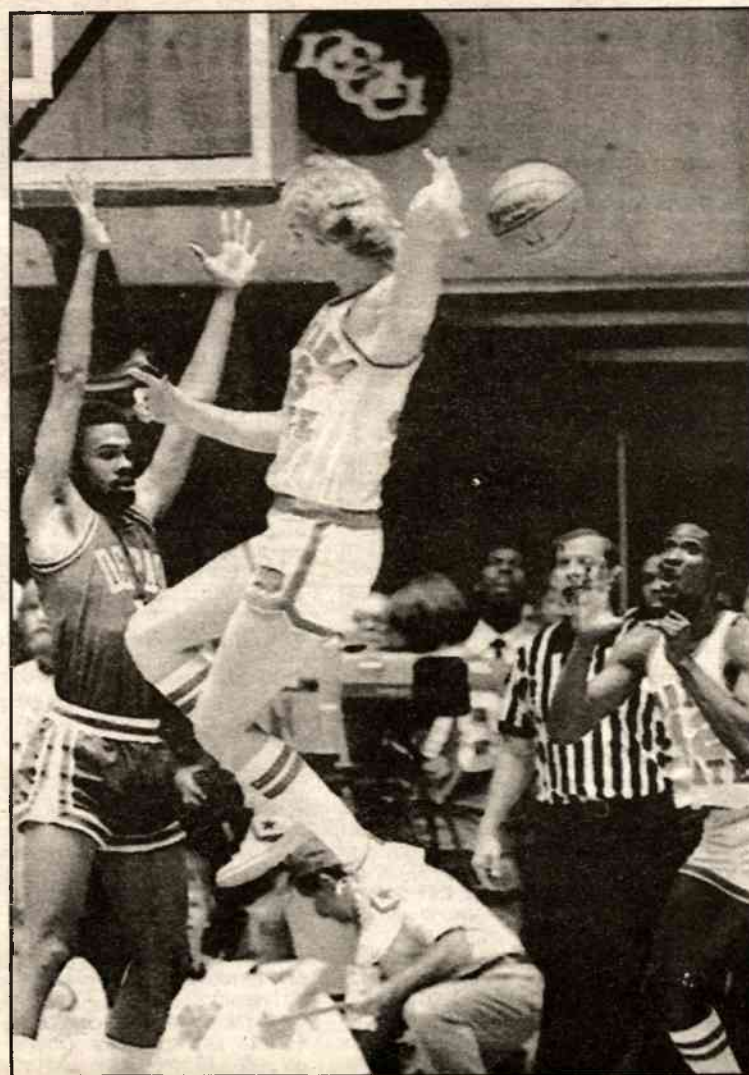
"I had no doubt in my mind that [Bird] would be one of the handful of great forwards that ever lived. And he turned out to be the best.

"That was the only time I saw him play [in Terre Haute] until he was a pro." Ryan later saw Bird and the Celtics play preseason exhibition games at Hulman Center through the mid-1980s.

Aside from The Pass, Ryan recalled another moment from Bird's rookie camp days at Marshfield.

According to Ryan, former Celtics coach Red Auerbach would conduct the Marshfield rookie camp alongside a high school and college basketball camp. Some of the sessions took place on outdoor courts.

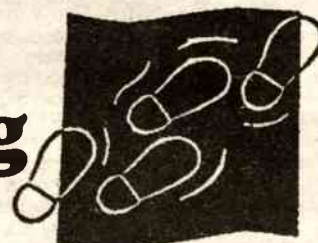
One day Harry Mangurian Jr., the team owner at the time, dropped in on the rookie camp for a visit, Ryan said. When Mangurian saw Bird, the highest-paid rookie to that point, playing outdoors on the asphalt courts, "He just about had the big one right there."



Seal it with a pass: No-look passes, such as this one by Larry Bird to ISU teammate Alex Gilbert in the Sycamores' 1979 NCAA semifinal victory over DePaul, were the first things to catch the eye of Boston Globe columnist Bob Ryan. Over the years, Ryan became a virtual encyclopedia of Bird knowledge.

Tribune-Star
file photo/Al

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See **Ryan**, Page H21

LARRY BIRD: A HALL OF FAMER

Ramblin' Reck

Terre Haute had a front-row seat to hoop history

Being at the right place at the right time can be a wonderful thing for anyone in any profession. It's really a plus in covering sports.

Being at the right place at the right time for more than 30 years has meant being able to cover such great people as Tommy John, Bruce Baumgartner, Kurt Thomas, David Wright, Amy Walker, Zane Smith, Holli Hyche, Dan Brandenburg, Tunch Ilkin, Cam Cameron, a host of great coaches, and many, many others.

One of the greatest, of course, has been Larry Bird. Being in Terre Haute for The Bird Years will be something that no one who was lucky enough to be here will forget. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Looking back on some of that period in commemoration of The Legend being inducted into The Basketball Hall of Fame:

■ Some opposing players and some fans got a preview of what was to come during Bird's red-shirt year at ISU. He practiced with the team and played some games with The Hulman Stars, going against the Indiana All-Stars at least once.

A story that reported what happened in one of those games had a headline that denoted that "Byrd" led The Stars in The Terre Haute Star. It wasn't the first time it happened, nor the last.

No one said much, except in a kidding way at ISU. Bird's Uncle Amon noticed it and kidded me about it a few times about it.

■ There was the time that Coach Bill Hodges and I went to Louisville to watch the U.S. team get ready to go overseas for the World University Games — Bird's first experience in international competition.

Denny Crum was coach of the team, and Bird was one of the main players. Many members of the Bird family made the fairly short trip from the Springs Valley area to Louisville to watch a practice game the night before the team left for the Games.

The trip, of course, was the first time that Bird had been out of the U.S. And he made the most of it.

■ Lots of games could be singled out in The Bird Years in Boston and Terre Haute. One has always stood out, simply because it might have been one of the best games ever played by these two teams.

The Sycamores defeated Bradley in

the semifinals of the 1978 Missouri Valley Conference tournament 88-81. Neither team missed many shots in the contest played in Hulman Center.

Bird had 33 points in the game to match the number on his uniform. Roger Phegley had 30 for the Braves in defeat. It just was a great show by two great players and two teams that played great that night.

The victory earned ISU the right to play Creighton at Omaha, Neb., for the MVC championship and a spot in the NCAA tournament. The Bluejays rallied to beat the Sycamores 54-52.

■ Another game that stands out was Indiana State's first appearance in the NIT in 1977. The Sycamores' 25-2 regular-season mark earned them a trip to Texas to play Houston.

A couple of players with similarities in their names who were destined to become regulars in the NBA were on the same court that night. Bird led the Sycamores and Otis Birdsong was the big gun for Houston.

LB tallied 44 points and pulled down 14 rebounds to outshine the home team star and nearly pulled out a victory for ISU with a shot that rimmed in and out at the finish as Houston hung on for an 83-82 victory.

■ Much has been made about the fact that Bird declined to talk with the print media his senior season at ISU. Certain national journalists unfairly chastised Sycamore sports information director Ed McKee and his staff for allowing it to happen.

Of course, they were the same folks who wanted to get that one exclusive bit with the star whom they quick to criticize and put down in the same breath without watching the man in person or even trying to get to know him.

Reasons have been given for Bird and Hodges doing it. Indeed, a story that put the wrong slant on what Bird had to say at the Missouri Valley media day proceedings was a major factor. Nonetheless, the coach and the player were up front about it in a one-on-one session following practice for a game against the Russians.

Hodges said it was just something the Larry felt was necessary and would be good for the team. If it was to be, we just wanted him to be consistent in the policy.

That he was until the NCAA tournament. No special interviews were granted to our knowledge except for one that LB granted the game before setting the ISU scoring record.

Andy Amey and I collaborated on a special series about Bird and Thomas,



Tribune-Star

Something to remember, night after night: Larry Bird, in action West Texas State in 1978-79 along with teammate Carl Nicks, turned ISU basketball tickets into a hot item during his Terre Haute days. Bird broke do records that season, including the Hulman Center single-game scoring record previously held by Jerry Newsom and Drake's Veterans Memorial Auditorium single-game scoring record previously held by Oscar Robertson.



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See **Reck**, Page H19

Treck • Continued from Page H18

during the two of them in a special to. The fact that The AP later med it worthy of an award just de it more special.

in the NCAA, Bird gave one of the t news conferences ever on the eve he Michigan State game. Hundreds national journalists got their first te of Bird's wit and dry sense of mor.

■ One of the milestones in Bird's eer at ISU came against Morris rvey his senior year when he set the eer scoring record.

The old mark had been held since 68 by a pretty good player named rry Newsom. And the Columbus tive was in the stands for the game.

After Bird broke the record, the me was halted and he was given the me ball. Without much hesitation, rd walked over to the stands and ve it to Newsom.

Just a nice gesture.

■ Terre Haute has had many big oments in connection with Larry rd. One of the biggest caught the al media and, really, everyone by rprise in ceremonies following ston's victory over the Los Angeles akers in the 1984 NBA playoffs.

The finals marked another matchup Bird against Magic Johnson, who led ichigan State to its victory over ISU the NCAA tournament. After the eltics had won, LB said, "This one is r Terre Haute."

He said dedicating the champi- nship would make up, in a way, for he '79 loss to the Spartans. "In their yes, at least, I had finally beaten Magic," he noted.

The city honored Bird once again for is touching tribute. Hundreds of fans ammed Fairbanks Park to honor him nd get a look at him.

■ Another big night in Bird's life ook place in Boston after he'd retired rom the Celtics. His aching back sim- ply wouldn't allow him to continue as a player.

His number was placed alongside other Boston greats in the upper reach- es of The Garden during the official tribute to one of Beantown's favorite ons. One of the most touching oments came when Bird's mother, Georgia, was introduced to the crowd.

She and one of her sons got a great ovation from the fans as they stood arm in arm in the fabled old facility.

■ One of the most famous games played by ISU and Bird during his three years with the Sycamores was the one that took place in Robertson Fieldhouse in Peoria, Ill. (It was not played in nearby Normal against Illi- nois State as one recent Bird book would have you believe.)

The Bradley Braves took on the undefeated Sycamores, with a mostly partisan crowd on hand, although a few ISU fans managed to get tickets. Dick Versace was the coach at Bradley that year. He later made a name for himself in television and in the NBA, coaching the Indiana Pacers for a time.

Ever the showman, he devised The Bird Cage Defense in an effort to stop Bird. He vowed he would do it and did it as LB scored just four points. The Sycamores won easily though, beating the Braves 91-72. Some of the other Sycamores had career nights as the team improved to 22-0.

The ISU-Bird Show played pretty well in Peoria that night.

■ Bird had one of the top games in his college career in Des Moines, Iowa, in his junior year with 45 points against Drake in Veterans Memorial Auditorium.

The reason the totals were signifi- cant is that Bird broke the facility record that had been set by Oscar Robertson when Cincinnati played in the Valley. One Hoosier replaced another Hoosier in the record books that night.

■ Everyone remembers and recalls the ISU matchup with Michigan State in the 1979 tournament.

The game that led to the champi- onship contest was equally as impor- tant for the Sycamores. They had to beat DePaul in order to be in the finals.

The Blue Demons were coached by the legendary Ray Meyer and were led by Mark Aguirre. They battled ISU to the wire before the Sycamores pre- vailed 76-74.

Bird had 35 points, 16 rebounds and nine assists in the contest played in Utah. Next up were the Michigan State Spartans.

Tom Reck can be reached by tele- phone at 1-800-783-8742, Ext. 227, by e-mail at treck@mail.tribstar.com or by fax at (812) 231-4321.

Special night: With former Celtics teammate M.L. Carr doing his trademark towel wave, Larry Bird laughs on his special tribute night on Feb. 4, 1993, in Boston Gar- den.

Tribune-Star
file photo/AP

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&

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No. 10

James C. Kelly '92

Basketball's best

Terre Haute still special to Bird

By Dale Long

Tribune-Star Sports Reporter

Biography - Bird, Larry
Community Affairs File

Ts AUG 25 1985

The young boy sat patiently near the shelter house on Max Gibson's lake estate east of Terre Haute.

He wanted to see his hero.

As the minutes passed it seemed to heighten the boy's anticipation. He sprang to his feet with each car that turned into the adjacent parking lot.

He wanted to see his hero.

Finally, a half-hour later, a white car pulled up near the shelter house. Seconds later a tall, lanky man, dressed in a white shirt and white dress pants, sporting a blond mustache, climbed out of the car. The visitor smiled.

Nearby, the boy's eyes grew big, his small mouth dropping open in amazement.

The man walked slowly past the boy, offering to shake a hand, offer a kind word, and greet a stranger like an old friend.

It was almost too good to be true for the boy. "I saw Larry Bird. I saw Larry Bird," he exclaimed. He had seen his hero.

Just like an energetic teenager on a first date, Terre Haute still has its love affair with Bird, nearly 10 years after the 6-foot-9 French Lick native first set foot on the Indiana State University campus.

The exploits of the Boston Celtics star are front page news in the sports section of The Tribune-Star. A local radio station carries broadcasts of Celtic games throughout the season.

The City of Terre Haute renamed a street near the ISU campus in Bird's honor and had a "We Love Larry Bird Day" in 1984 after the former collegiate AllAmerican helped the Celtics capture the National Basketball Association championship.

To many persons, Bird is their hero, too.

However, the 28-year-old basketball player also seems to have a special affection for his "second hometown." A Larry Bird Golf Tournament, which finished Friday at the Terre Haute Country Club, helps raise funds for the local Boys Club, where Bird practiced honing his skills while playing at ISU.

"There is a special place in my heart for Terre Haute," Bird said during an interview last Thursday. "French Lick is my hometown, but this is where I got my start. These are the people that opened the way for me. My time here in Terre Haute will always be special to me."

Bird's future was unsettled after leaving Indiana University in 1974. After a short stop at the Northwood Institute at West Baden, the former Springs Valley High School star was convinced to give college basketball another try, joining Bob King's ISU team in 1975.

After sitting out a year as a transfer student, Bird first put on a Sycamore uniform in 1976, helping the team to a somewhat remarkable 25-3 record. He averaged 32.8 points a game during the 1976-77

season, what would become his best scoring average in a three-year collegiate career.

The love affair had started.

"We had a great team my first year here but we couldn't get anybody in Hulman Center," Bird said. "Once we started winning they all started showing up and wanting a piece of the action. It's weird how fans are sometimes. I guess that's how things are."

Hulman Center wasn't large enough for all the people that wanted a glimpse of Bird and ISU play the next two years.

And the city went crazy in 1978-79 when the Sycamores amazed the college basketball world by completing an undefeated regular-season record and advancing to the championship game of the NCAA post-season tournament.

Bird, a forward, scored 28.6 points a game as a senior, having a 49-point game in an ISU victory over Wichita State. That record, much like many of his others, still stands in the college's record book. For his performances Bird was the NCAA's College Player of the Year in 1978-79.

Today Bird says he's lost touch with the ISU basketball program and university officials.

"It's my alma mater that's all. I probably haven't set foot on the campus five times since I left," he said.

Bird said he occasionally talks to Bill Hodges, his collegiate coach in 1978-79 who left ISU three years after Bird's departure.

"College is over. Terre Haute is the town. The college is a part of the community. I try to pay back the people of the community, not the school. The people are the ones that came out and watched us play," Bird said.

Bird is now recognized as one of the best players in the NBA. Last season he was named the NBA's Most Valuable Player for the second straight season. He's averaged more than 20 points a game since being named the NBA's Rookie of the Year in 1979-80.

Boston Celtic Coach K.C. Jones said he marvels at the ability Bird has shown the past six seasons.

"There are very few that can come right in a dominate the game like Larry did. Bill Russell was another," the coach said. "You can count on one hand the guys with the ability and desire to make the big shot when it's needed, to be the team leader, to do whatever it takes to win. Larry's got to rank among the best in that category," the coach said.

You quickly get that opinion when talking to Bird.

"I feel very confident that I can play with the best players in the world," he said. "I try to improve and be consistent. It's hard sometimes."

Later, while Bird talked to a television reporter the nervous boy walked up to Bird to get a handshake. Within a few seconds the boy got a hug and a ride in Larry's arms.

It made for a touching scene.

"That's the side about Larry that nobody gets to see," Jones said. "He's human too, you know."

Having a big smile on his face, the boy is on cloud nine. Local basketball fans have been on the same cloud for some time.

Bird, Larry

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Community Affairs File

Bird, Larry

Keeping Bird vows quiet wasn't easy

Biography - B

By Dave Delaney
Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

Here's a trivia question for you.
Question: What did Larry Bird wear on his wedding day Saturday in Terre Haute?

Answer: Stonewashed jeans, a pinkish-colored casual shirt and, what else, tennis shoes.

The above information was provided by Clay Superior Court Judge John P. Stelle. And he should know, he performed the wedding ceremony for Larry and his bride Dinah Mattingly.

"They were married at high noon," Stelle said, "and the ceremony lasted about five minutes. It was real casual." Stelle said Mattingly also wore stonewashed jeans and a white-jeweled top. The ceremony took place at the home of Max and Jackie Gibson northeast of Terre Haute.

Stelle said Bird played basketball at the Terre Haute Boys Club after the wedding ceremony and 18 holes of golf Sunday morning at the Country Club of Terre Haute.

The wedding dinner took place Saturday evening in the MVP Room of Larry Bird's Boston Connection. Gibson said Bird had a filet mignon and his bride ate stir-fry vegetables.

Once Bird had been married, news of the event spread across the nation. Gibson was called by a

number of publications for comment, including the Boston Globe, The Associated Press and the National Enquirer.

The wedding was a well-guarded secret, aided by fact that the once obligatory three-day waiting period to obtain a marriage license after making application is no longer in effect. The law changed July 1.

Vigo County Clerk Pat Mansard played a big part in honoring the request of Bird and his fiancée that their wedding be a private affair.

Rather than have them come down to the Vigo County Courthouse to sign the large record of marriages book, Mansard sent Theresa McCullough, her deputy clerk in charge of marriage licenses, to Bird's room in the Boston Connection late Friday afternoon.

Mansard said if anyone had spotted her at Bird's local business with a large marriage book under her arm, the secret might have been over.

"It was real nice he came back here to get married," Mansard said.

"Dinah said she would meet me in the lobby of the hotel," McCullough said. "She said she had short dark hair." McCullough said she'd be the woman carrying the large cardboard box. They had no trouble finding each other.

"I can imagine the stir he would have caused coming to the courthouse," McCullough said.

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Bird, Larry

Larry Bird takes bride in quiet local ceremony

✓ Biography-B

15 OCT 01 1989

By Vicki Weger

Special to The Tribune-Star

People in Indiana agree that Larry Bird is one of the greatest basketball players to ever grace the hardwood.

But today, Larry Bird was not the best man — he was the groom. And Dinah Mattingly was his bride.

Bird and Mattingly were wed in a brief and private ceremony at the residence of Max and Jackie Gibson 10 miles northeast of Terre Haute. Members of the wedding party were casually attired.

Mrs. Gibson was matron of honor and Gibson was Bird's best man. After repeating their vows to each other, the groom placed a simple band of gold on the bride's hand.

It was noon as Clay County Superior Court Judge John Stelle pronounced them husband and wife. Taking her hand in his, Larry leaned down and kissed his wife.

Following the ceremony, Larry and Dinah cut the wedding cake, a traditional white creation adorned with white flowers framing the words, "Larry and Dinah."

The small wedding party, which included Judge Stelle and his wife, Carol, the Gibsons, and the assis-



THE NEWLYWEDS
Dinah and Larry Bird

tant equipment manager of the Boston Celtics, Joe "Corkie" Qatato, drank a champagne toast to the newlyweds.

The couple became engaged in the summer of 1988, but the wedding date was a closely guarded secret. Not even Judge Stelle knew what time the wedding would occur until he received a call from Gibson an hour before the ceremony.

Gibson asked the Judge to swing by the bakery and pick up the wedding cake on the way.

The couple said they kept the ceremony small and private because they have so many friends and family members that they did not want to have to exclude anyone from a larger wedding.

Mattingly is the daughter of William and Colleen Mattingly of Zionsville. She is a native of Terre Haute and a graduate of Schulte High School and Indiana State University.

Bird is the son of Georgia Bird of French Lick and the late Joe Bird. He is a native of French Lick and the adopted son of Terre Haute where he catapulted Indiana State University into the national sports spotlight in 1979 by leading the Sycamores basketball team to the NCAA championship game against Michigan State University.

He went on to become an NBA all-star at forward for the Boston Celtics.

After the wedding reception, Larry and Dinah joined their friends, Ginger and Jerry Smith, for — you guessed it — a game of basketball.

The bride and groom were entertained at a wedding supper in the MVP Room of Larry Bird's Boston Connection.

On Tuesday, Mr. and Mrs. Bird will leave Indiana for their winter home at Boston.

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